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CONTENTS

	<i>Pages</i>
1. Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi	387
2. The Call of the Christ	387
3. Hero and Saint	389
4. Sivananda Lahari	390
5. God, Religion and Realization	392
6. On Bhakti Yoga	395
7. Mandukya Upanishad	395
8. Man: the crowning Glory of Creation	396
9. Dialogue Between Bali and Virochana	398
10. Vivekachudamani	399
11. True Interpreter of Yoga	401
12. What is Nirvana ?	402
13. Sivananda's 'Upadeshamala' in Danish	403
14. Ashram News and Notes	404
15. All-India Divine Life Conference at Bangalore	405
16. News from Abroad	406
17. The Divine Life Index	407

31

1st December 1958

*To Dr Frederic Gregorberg
Stanford,*

Vedanta proclaims the unity of existence. Vedanta breathes the spirit of fearlessness, harmony and universality. Freedom from perplexion is the watch-word of Vedanta.

Knowledge of Brahman is of the nature of direct realisation or actual experience. When Brahman is revealed one attains immortality.

May you attain the wisdom of the Self now and here.

Sivananda

RELIGIOUS CALENDAR

(Sivanandanagar)

(21 Dec. '58 to 20 Jan. '59)

DECEMBER 1958

- 21 Vaikuntha Ekadasi ;
Bhagavadgita Jayanti
- 23 Pradosha Puja
- 25 Christmas Day
- 25/26 Purnima ;
Dattatreya Jayanti

- 31 Fifteenth Anniversary
of the Foundation of
Sri Viswanath Mandir

JANUARY 1959

- 5 Ekadasi
- 6 Pradosha Puja
- 8/9 Amavasya ;
All-Souls Day
- 14 Makara Sankranti ;
Uttarayana Punyakala



THE DIVINE LIFE

Volume Twenty

December, 1958

Number Twelve

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace,
That where there is hatred,
I may bring love;
That where there is wrong,
I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;
That where there is discord,
I may bring harmony;
That where there is error,
I may bring truth;
That where there is doubt,
I may bring faith;
That where there is despair,
I may bring hope;

And where there are shadows,
I may bring Thy light;
That where there is sadness,
I may bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek
Rather to comfort than be comforted,
To understand than be understood,
To love than be loved;
For it is by giving that one receiveth,
It is by self-forgetting that one finds,
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven,
It is by dying
That one awakens to eternal life.

Christmas Message

The Call of the Christ

(Sri Swami Sivananda)

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

(Matthew: The Sermon on the Mount)

Such was the call of Jesus, not only to his disciples, but to all those in whose hearts he had ignited the spark of spirituality through his Gospel, a Gospel that was not confined to an ordained few, a Gospel that was not exclusively bequeathed

to any particular Church, but which was essentially meant for the entire world.

Within every man there is the spark of divinity which can never be snuffed out whatever may be the conditions in which he lives, whatever may be the state of his evolution. There is hope for even the worst materialist. The Kingdom of Heaven is for all. Only man has to try to reach the feet of the Lord, by dying to his lower nature and treading the path laid out by Jesus the Good Shepherd.

GOOD AND EVIL

Within every man there are potentialities for good as well as for evil. No one is absolutely good

and no one is incorrigibly evil though evil tendencies generally predominate the life of man. But God has given him the power of discrimination, Jesus has shown him the way, and it is for him either to grow into goodness or to degenerate into evil ways.

Whatever man soweth, so does he reapeth. Through evil comes evil. Through good comes good. Untruth, hatred, vice bring unhappiness to their perpetrator and to those on whom these are employed. Truth, love and goodness bring happiness, peace and well-being to those who resort to these and also to those towards whom these are directed. The touchstone of discrimination and the capacity to act as per the right judgment decide the destiny of man.

LIGHT WITHIN

This discrimination is the light within man. The will to live by the commandments of Jesus, the courage to do what is just and right even though it may be to the detriment of one's creature-comfort or material good, the purity of heart that allows no ill-will towards even the wrongdoer and does not harbour an impure motive, constitute the light within man.

The light within man is also the tremendous power of his mind which has enabled him to delve deep into the mysteries of nature and harness its boundless potentialities, the power that he can employ for his good and the good of all, or for his ruin and the destruction of all. Hence Jesus saith that the candle is not lit to be put under a bushel but on a candlestick.

RIVALRY TO RUIN

Unhappily, the world today is engaged in a bitter rivalry to surpass each other in the power of destruction. True, man is also engaged in harnessing the power of nature for his good, but that attempt is very feeble and limited when compared to his efforts in the other direction, and even this attempt is directed in a very partial way with little consideration for universal good.

Selfishness dominates the life of man. He does not want to share the God-given bounties with others, but looks only to himself, his country, his friends. Ideological conflicts, political, social and economic, blur his vision and viciate his life. The spirit of charity is throttled by doctrinaire approach towards everything. The candle which Jesus wanted to be put on "candlestick" (the altar of God) so that "it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (the world), is being set under "a bushel," to set fire to the house of man.

TRUTH MUST TRIUMPH

But human wantonness can never reign supreme. Everything mundane has an end. Materialism alone cannot sustain life. The power of spirituality, though very feeble in the world of today, is bound to succeed. Truth must triumph, not falsehood.

The light is within you. It is for you to wake up to its awareness, to open the portals of your inner recesses through removing the clutches of the lower nature, and to allow that light of inner purity to illuminate your entire being, seep through and beyond you towards all humanity.

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." One cannot be enlightened and yet be inactive. Man must work for the good of his fellow-beings. Through service and love alone can one enter the heart of another. Service and love can be powerful only when the heart is pure, only when the mind is cleansed of the dross of ignorance.

On the blessed occasion of the Christmas, let us pray that Jesus may enthrone his light in the hearts of all, that he may inspire all to tread the path he had trodden for man, that he may enlighten all minds to desist from evil and strive for the welfare of one another, that he may give the strength of will to abide by what is right and just, that his teachings be lived by everyone, that his grace may protect all. Amen.

Hero and Saint

(Prof. M.M. Bhattacharya, M.A., PH.D., P.R.S.)

(Head of the English Lit. Deptt., Viswabharati, Shantiniketan)

'Saint' and 'sinner' are correlative terms, as are 'hero' and 'saint.' The attraction of the first pair lies in alliteration. The terms are contradictory, though they are often found in just opposition. A saint may once have been a sinner; in that case, saintliness begins where sinfulness ends. But a saint fulfils his mission best by redeeming a sinner, and shines in all his glory against the dark background of vice and sin, moral squalor and degradation.

It is undeniable that the saint cannot be a self-sufficient being; he suffers by being self-centred, and he makes an end of himself when he forgets his fallen brothers and sisters. It is the sight of downfall that produces the urge for uplift. It is the agony of sinners that produces the urge for uplift. It is the agony of sinners that heralds the emergence of the Saviour.

THE SAINT IS A HERO

The hero and the saint are generally believed to belong to different planes, and one of them is supposed to be more sublime than the other. Heroism is generally associated with rough strength, physical powers and vigour, while saintliness is looked upon as a form of abstention and self-control. The former seems to be an illustration of dynamism and activity; the latter is often identified with passivity and self-absorption.

But heroism need not be a mere physical virtue. Mental and spiritual discipline is an indispensable part of it; and divorced from it, heroism becomes mere brute force and senseless violence. It is equally true that without physical fitness and intellectual elevation, spirituality ends in inanition and extinction. It appears that passivity and activity, self-control, and self-assertion, vigour and flexibility, must enter into the composition of the highest form of human excellence. The best specimen of humanity is heroic as well as saintly. He is an impersonation of self-abnegation and full-blooded life, of strictness of conscience and spontaneity of consciousness, of culture and worldly

activity, of vigour and self-surrender. Like Wordsworth's skylark, he is "true to the kindred points of Heaven and Home."

CORRELATIVE ASPECTS

Carlyle, therefore, recognizes as heroic the prophet and the poet as much as the iconoclastic reformer and the powerful leader of men (called the king). Heroism is an attribute which is not sharply differentiated by him from saintliness. Greatness may dwell in the warrior as much as in the priest and the hermit, and these are not antagonists, but are linked by a close bond of kinship. Like concave and convex, matter and spirit, mind and soul, earth and heaven, they are but different aspects of the same Great Unknown.

Indeed, it is necessary to go further and suggest that the active and the spiritual, the nerve and the soul, act and re-act on each other. Physical strength and prowess have their effect on the spirit. Activity is a step to contemplative depth; sense-experience helps the attainment of wisdom. Fighting and victory lead to the emancipation of the ego and renunciation; spiritual realization has followed in the train of worldly success. This point has been examined in connection with the achievements of Milton.

WORLD: A FIELD OF EXPERIENCE

Some critics believe that the poet should never have dabbled in politics and should have devoted himself solely to the service of the Muse of poetry. Had he not indulged in religious and political controversy and wasted valuable years of his life in the service of the commonwealth as Latin Secretary, the world of poetry would have been the gainer. Others oppose this view and assert that Milton's political and social experiences have entered into the very texture of *Paradise Lost* and *Samson*; and these great literary works would have never been produced if Milton had shut himself up in his library.

The lord of Dwaraka is another case in point. Could he have been the great author of the Song

Celestial (*Bhagavat Geta*), would he have risen to the supreme heights of spiritual realization and be the propounder of a synthetic philosophy, embracing Karma, Jnana and Bhakti, if he had kept himself aloof from life and action, from the political turmoil and diplomatic complications of ancient India? What would have been his role on the stage set on the field of Kurukshetra if he had been merely a recluse poring over palm-leaf manuscripts in a solitary cell?

LIFE AND ACTION

The teachings of the *Geeta* were certainly the outcome, not merely of ancient lore, but also of deep contemplation and great experiments conducted in a vast and varied sphere of action and thought, passion and vice. Kurukshetra represents the wars of Kaurava and Pandava as much as the eternal conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, upsurge and decline, going on in the heart of man. Avoidance of life and action must have meant even for Sri Krishna, corrosion and extinction. He must be either Partha-Sarathi, Kamsari and Karma-Yogi at once or almost a non-entity.

A saint, therefore, cannot afford to run away from life. The highest must derive nourishment

from the lowest. He must either purify or re-fashion it as a redeemer or fight with it as a hero.

LAUREL FOR SWAMI SIVANANDA

Swami Sivanandaji is known all over the country as a holy man given to spiritual pursuits. Though quite correct, this estimate is clearly based on a half-truth. It takes no account of the struggles he has gone through, and his grim fight with the forces of ignorance, evil, superstition and disease. Swamiji rose up against man's physical infirmity in early youth and against infatuation when he gave a clarion call to higher life.

He had to contend against the apathy and listlessness of his countrymen when he founded his Ashram and his Forest Academy; and the propagation of his message has throughout been an arduous up-hill journey. He has borne on his Atlantean shoulders burdens which would crush a host of youths. Now, after a life of strenuous labour and stiff contest, he stands on the summit of the hill at the foot of which the tide of battles had roared and surged. The halo of the saint which glows round his venerable head today fits on admirably with the laurel-crown which rests on his victorious brow.

Sivananda Lahari

(*Sayings of Swami Sivananda, Compiled by Sri Sivananda-Nilakantan*)

[Continued from the Previous Issue]

38. Selfishness is the greatest sin. It constrains the heart. It separates man from man. It makes him greedy. It is the root of all evils and sufferings. Destroy selfishness through selfless service, charity, generosity and love.

39. Never speak ill of others. Also never hear ill of others. Never listen to one man blaming another in private.

40. Strength is life. Weakness is death. Have strength born of wisdom of the Self. Destroy all weaknesses by identifying yourself with the Supreme Self, the Source for all power and strength.

41. There can be no strength without suffering. There can be no growth without sacrifice. Develop patience, fortitude and the spirit of self-sacrifice to a maximum degree.

42. Be moderate in eating and drinking. Practise self-restraint. Have devotion to the Lord. Hurt none in thought, word and deed. Dwell in solitude. Reflect. Enquire. Meditate. This is the teaching of sages and seers.

43. Practise pure, unselfish love in your daily life. Embrace all living beings. Crush all forms of hatred. Expand your heart. This is real culture or civilization.

44. Every man is directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, knowingly or unknowingly attempting to find the ultimate Truth. The wise man moves in the straight road; the ignorant man moves in a zigzag path.

45. All life is one. The world is one home. All are members of one human family. All creation

is an organic whole. No man is independent of this whole. Man makes himself miserable by separating himself from others. Separation is death. Unity is eternal life. Cultivate cosmic love. Include all. Embrace all. Serve all. Recognize the worth of others. Destroy all barriers, racial, religious and natural prejudices, that separate man from man. Recognize the non-dual principle, the immortal essence within all creatures. Protect animals. Let all life be sacred. Then this world will be a paradise of beauty, a haven of peace, a Vaikuntha.

46. The chief aim of education is to teach man to live in harmony with others. The fundamental purpose of education is to teach him the way to remove all barriers that separate man from man and recognize the one underlying, non-dual principle, in all beings.

47. Anger is a great force. If you control it, it can be transmuted into a power which can move the whole world.

48. There are some flowers which have a beautiful colour, but have no scent. Even so, there are some who talk sweet, flowery words, but do not act accordingly.

49. Bear insult, bear injury. This is the most important Sadhana. This will give you immense peace and strength of will.

50. The Lord is within you. He is seated in the heart of all beings. Whatever you see, hear, touch, or feel, is God. Therefore, hate not anybody, cheat not anybody, love all, and be one with all. You will soon attain eternal bliss and perennial joy.

51. Difficulties come to strengthen but not to weaken and discourage. Overcome them through patient efforts.

52. Truth is nobody's property. Truth is not the property of any particular sect, creed or religion. Truth is the property of everybody and is the same for all.

53. Agitation of the mind is pain. The mind wanders. This is pain. The mind is steady and one-pointed. This is happiness. Calmness of the mind leads to bliss.

54. If you are earnest in your efforts, if you admit your weaknesses and faults you will surely

reach the goal of life, some time or other.

55. He who is humble, calm, quiet in mind and controlled in conduct, and who is contented in his heart, finds the whole universe full of joy and bliss.

56. Do not put on a serious face always. Be humorous occasionally. Humour is a divine gift. Let it be an educative and instructive humour, not worldly or one calculated to belittle others.

57. It is impossible to satisfy all human wants, because with every attempt to satisfy them new wants arise. So it is wiser to decrease your wants by contentment and knowledge of truth.

58. Speak politely. Be sweet in your speech. Do not praise yourself. Do not abuse anybody. Do not be discourteous. Give up back-biting. Do not mock at others. Do not laugh on improper occasions. Do not treat the poor with contempt. Beware that you may be poor one day. Do not be revengeful. Be grateful.

59. Jealousy is like a fire; it eats up goodness just as fire consumes fuel. Therefore, abandon jealousy totally and develop magnanimity and large-heartedness. Embrace all. Love all. You will soon enter the Kingdom of God.

60. Be clean-hearted, sweet-tongued, true-tongued. Do not destroy your soul by hatred and greed. Live amicably with others. Adapt, adjust, accommodate.

61. Time is most precious. If one minute is lost in vain, it is lost for ever. Make the best use of it. Spend it in Japa, meditation, Kirtan and study of sacred scriptures.

62. Be noble. Be gentle. Be tolerant. Try to think from the standpoint of others, and not yours, when dealing with them.

63. Happiness comes to him who seeks the happiness of others. Relieve the sufferings of those who are distressed, as per your ability.

64. Kindness is the root of righteousness. Kindness is the enemy of cruelty, harshness, rudeness. It softens the heart. It opens the door of heaven.

65. A man who has no devotion to God, who does not try to live a spiritual life, who does not serve humanity, who does not share what he has with others, is wasting his precious, God-given life.

66. Have your own conviction. Stick to your resolves. Never be afraid of anybody. But do not be obstinate, arrogant and conceited. Feel the guiding invisible hand of your Indweller.

67. Falsehood debases life. In the heart where truth abides there is the abode of God.

68. Good health is the foundation, not only of success in any walk of life, but also of success in Yoga and spiritual pursuits. Weakness and spi-

rituality are contradictory.

69. Do some useful, solid and substantial work when you are young, when you have abundant energy, vigour and good health.

70. Believe in the supreme power of God. Believe in Truth. You will be free from difficulties and sorrows. That Supreme Power will guide you, strengthen you and comfort you. You will be peaceful amidst trials, adversities, failures and tempestuous circumstances.

God, Religion and Realization

(*Sri Leslie Shepard, London*)

All religious teachings can be expressed in the single word 'God,' for which there are equivalents in every language of the world.

This one word contains everything, and all the other millions of words are only matters of detail or elaborate commentaries.

In India, the one word AUM, in its three syllables and four aspects, contains liberation. In Hebrew mysticism, the sacred name of God could only be said by the High Priest once a year, under his breath, in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle. In the Christian story of creation we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Transcendental power was vested in the one word, in the eternal One, from which all creation proceeded.

PHENOMENON OF VARIETY

If we can contain all religion in one word, how has it come about that there are so many contradictory religions, so many millions of words?

This is simply an expression of the phenomenon of variety and can be regarded as commentary upon that aspect of God which is all-inclusive. The simplest universal observation upon God would consist of two words: "All Is." The word "All" contains the infinite variety of God in manifestation. "Is" indicates the actual quality of existence; realization of the "Is-ness" of "All" expresses the true nature of reality beyond the limitations of the senses.

TWO ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Thus, religion has two aspects. The first is knowledge leading us to fuller comprehension of

All; the second is *experience*, by means of which what is can be properly realized. In Indian thought, knowledge is represented by the concept of Brahma, the Creator, awakening on a lotus and trying vainly to discover its roots. The incalculable variety and detail of life shades off into Infinity; so understanding must also be supplemented by another way, that of experience. The path of experience leads to developed intuition.

Knowledge teaches us discrimination. Discrimination prepares the way for balanced intuition. Intuition without discrimination leads to confusion and hysteria. Knowledge without intuition is empty and sterile.

SYNTHESIS OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

It is the task of religions to teach us knowledge of God and experience of God. At different times in history, different religions have emphasized various aspects of this teaching in various different ways. Primitive religion taught 'Mysteries'—supreme dramatizations of essential stages of the religious life. The Mystery of Creation, of Birth, of the succession of Day and Night, the Mystery of Suffering and Death—these were danced, sung and enacted by all.

Subsequently, religions began to stress intellectual considerations which had been absent from the supreme experiences of primitive religion, and now the emphasis began to be placed on the phenomenon of diversity as different great religions sprang up. Thus, the existence of different religions in itself emphasizes the wider infinite nature

of reality, as opposed to earlier over-simplifications. It might be said that primitive religion over-emphasized the intuitive aspects, and the diversity of the later religions over-emphasized the aspects of knowledge. Today, we need to make a grand synthesis.

If you put together all known religions, past and present, which is the business of Comparative Religion, you will find how all have something in common.

MYSTERY: THE COMMON FACTOR

Some have treated certain mysteries more beautifully than others. The Christian religion has supremely emphasized the Crucifixion story—an essential mystery in the development of the soul. This is perhaps the only important mystery which is not fully indicated in Hindu religion. Hindu religion, however, excels in beautifully detailed expositions of ethics and philosophy, and in its esoteric and romantic stories of the life of Sri Krishna.

The mystery of the virgin birth is common to many great religions, as it enshrines the greatest mystery of the beginning of the human family, the one question with which all children puzzle their parents. The mysteries of pain and death are common to all religions. Zen Buddhism is notable for its specialization on the mystery of knowledge beyond opposites—the reality which transcends mind and body. In this latter respect, the Western religions have perhaps over-concentrated on intellectual knowledge, so much so that they have begun to dwindle into purely formal doctrines from which the essence has departed.

BALANCE BETWEEN MIND AND BODY

In the Yoga-Vedanta teachings of the East, however, the balance between mind and body is beautifully observed in the different paths of Yoga. All these ways of self-development enhance one's powers of discrimination, and have something in common with the earlier Christian ideas of "Spiritual Exercises." Every position in Hatha Yoga, for example, has a spiritual counterpart, and should be practised in such a way that this intuition is developed side by side by physical progress.

All that has been said and all that all religions can teach, is simply generalization—signs-

posts to an Infinity which can never be contained in words, but which may be discovered through them. It is impossible for the mind to comprehend all, as it is restricted to the limitations of the senses. Words and ideas try to put a rough frame around infinity, so that some simple concept appropriate to our stage of self-development may be considered at any given time.

MUSIC AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Perhaps we come nearest to God in Music, because musical thought is abstract and of infinite discrimination and complexity. Pure music has finer shades of meaning than words, and combines the paths of knowledge and experience simultaneously. Music has naturally played an essential part in the growth of all religions, and it is no accident that one of the greatest living musicians is also one of our great theologians. Albert Schweitzer, the supreme exponent of the deeply religious music of J. S. Bach, retired from the world to found a mission in Africa. Our own Swami Sivananda is famous for his love of pure music, and for his own inspiring Kirtans.

Many people believe that the path of religious experience is a slow, painful search for something which is difficult to find, and they plod hopelessly on, gloomily scrutinizing every detail of the journey. This is a great misconception. God is so near to us all that His overwhelming presence can be terrifying if we are not properly prepared for the revelation by knowledge and discrimination. The reality which transcends opposites can be catastrophic in its impact on the human system.

REALIZATION AND RELIGIOUS HYSTERIA

I can state as a matter of personal experience that the difficulty is *not* in discovering God, but in ensuring that the discovery shall be made slowly until one's mind and body are properly prepared. For this reason, I view the problem as one of *holding back* this infinite revelation until the whole system is prepared to meet the shock. Even the smallest glimpses of realization can overwhelm a man and result in hysteria and madness.

During the Revivalist Gospel campaigns in England and America in the last century, many persons were converted by the inspired emotion-

alism of preachers, and saw a small glimpse of the truth for the first time in their lives. For the first time, they had a revelation of the meaning and purpose of human existence and saw how they had wasted years of their lives in useless activities that would not help them when death came. This truth stupefied them, sent them into trances, made them dance and shout like madmen, climb up to the top of high buildings, and generally exhibit all the familiar aspects of religious hysteria. One man went around for days with an expression of horrified wonder, simply repeating the word 'Infinity!' with tragic astonishment and pathos, as some of its meaning flooded in on him.

NEED OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

I can truthfully say that any small degree of understanding on the path of realization is frightening if one is not prepared by a strong mind and body, which is the business of Indian religious Sadhana. The smallest knowledge of God feels like being drowned in a vast ocean of an indescribable ecstasy; the soul faints in sensations beyond pleasure and pain, and such moments bring tears and shuddering. It is just as well that we can protect ourselves from premature revelations by a system of thought, by the pursuit of religious knowledge. Our efforts to seek enlightenment have the opposite effect of holding it back and exercising our strength. When effort ceases and we are still, the flood of God-realization rushes in.

The religious progress lies on a razorsharp edge over a bridge of swords. Proper discrimination can develop our self-control and prevent the first revelations from damaging us before we are ready for realization. Ultimately the whole truth lies beyond discrimination itself, and there is a level on which every aspect of life is equally significant and luminous with the presence of God. On this level, the most mundane aspects of everyday existence—breathing, eating, putting on one's

shoes, excreting, and so on—all have transcendental significance.

SADHANA MUST PREPARE THE WAY

Such understanding must come slowly. Now we can understand the traditional practice amongst the Rishis of old in testing applicants for spiritual progress by tempting them with transient pleasures. In this way, only those who were ready for the first stages could begin to receive instruction. Today, many come prematurely to the spiritual life, and do not know that truth is so powerful that it may twist or destroy those who are not yet fit for it. Sadhana must purify one by teaching Contentment, Dispassion, Proper Enquiry, Courage and Strength. It is for this reason that the greatest part of Sadhana is Yama and Niyama.

In fact, the presence of God is so near that it is difficult not to discover Him before we are ready. Religions teach useful disciplines of mind and body that prepare and strengthen us for supreme revelation. All religions share part of the truth, and the more we understand the better we prepare ourselves for the whole truth. When we have learnt discipline and self-control from an infinity of ideas, doctrines and practices, we can reduce such distinctions to the simplest summaries. I began with the single word "God" and the two-word universal observation "All Is" which is an exposition of the one word. Swami Sivananda is responsible for the beautiful summaries: "Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realize. Be Good, Do Good, Be Kind, Be Compassionate. Enquire 'Who Am I,' Know the Self, and Be Free." In this way all religious teachings can be summarized. Such pregnant words are the starting point and the end of true meditation.

Out of the One, comes infinite diversity and all the separate manifestations, dissolving finally back once more into the Eternal One—in God.

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On Bhakti Yoga

(Sri Swami Sivananda)

1. Love unites the individual soul with God.
2. It is only love that finds out God.
3. God is the primal essence.
4. The vision of God is a gift of God. It is not an achievement attained by human effort independent of God.
5. God is revealed to those who love Him and whose minds have been purified by devotion to holy scriptures and holy preceptors, practice of Karma Yoga and, more than all, Prapatti or self-surrender.
6. God is Love which resides in every heart irrespective of caste and creed, high and low status.
7. Loving remembrance is the method of reaching Him.
8. I have drunk the elixir of God by which all other elixirs have become bitter and worthless.
9. Many saints came from the so-called lower classes. They were illiterate. They did manual labour to make both ends meet. They were persecuted by persons in power, and those of higher
- caste.
10. Sadhana was a dealer in meat. Dharma was a poor cultivator. Sena was a court barber at Rewa. Kabir was a weaver. Raidas was a cobbler. Tukaram and Namdev were Sudras. Namdev was a tailor. Tukaram was a cultivator.
11. Without renunciation, Bhakti or devotion can never be cultivated in the heart.
12. God demands complete self-surrender from His devotees.
13. Love is a tremendous force in the world. It draws men together. It is quite as real as electricity or magnetism or gravity.
14. All life is divine. All love is basically divine love.
15. A devotee who has made total self-surrender to God feels that he has no independent existence of his own. He lives in the Lord.
16. The way to attain Krishna is to become a Gopi.
17. Make your body the temple of the Lord. Become Lord-filled, Lord-intoxicated.

Mandukya Upanishad

(Sri D. S. Krishnaiyer)

This Upanishad begins with a Mantra explaining OM. OM comprises all things in the three states of time—past, present and future. It also embraces what is beyond all time.

The next Mantra says that not only is the whole objective existence Brahman, but the Atman also is Brahman. The Reality manifests in the subject in the four states of Consciousness—the waking state, the dreaming state, the state of dreamless, deep sleep, and the superconscious state. These four states of consciousness are called the four feet of Brahman. This Mantra is one of the Mahavakyas (*Ayam Atma Brahma—This Atma is Brahman*) of the Upanishads which indicates the unity of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. It belongs to Atharva Veda.

The Jiva (individual soul) whose field of activity is the waking state, is called Vaiswanara.

He enjoys the gross life. He is the first foot of Atman.

The Jiva whose field is the dreaming life is called Taijasa. He enjoys the subtle impressions of the mind. He is the second foot of Atman.

The one in the deep sleep state is called Prajna. His 'ingathered' potential consciousness is of the form of bliss. He is the enjoyer of bliss. He is the third foot of Brahman.

The Atman in this state rests in Anandamaya Kosha (blissful sheath), identifying with Karana Sareera (causal body). He is in the sheath of bliss—being free from any agitation or desire of mind. He is in a state of quiescence, peace being nearest to the fourth state. In dream the Jiva rests in Hita Nadi. In deep sleep the Jiva rests in Purita Nadi (pericardium). These are etherial Nadis (pulse) arising from the heart.

In the macrocosmic aspect, Brahman is the Lord of all, omniscient, Controller and Indweller of all, the origin and also the state of dissolution of all beings, and the cause of all existence. He is called Ishwara.

In the cosmic aspect of the great Atman, Ishwara is associated with the primary conditions of Upadhi—the Maya. In that state, He is the creator, preserver and the destroyer of the whole universe. By His Maya Shakti (illusory power), He performs these three functions.

In the cosmic aspect, the other functionaries (Devatas) governing the two great parts of the universe—viz., the gross and subtle—are Virat and Hiranyagarbha. These are the counterparts in cosmos corresponding to Vaiswanara and Taijasa, respectively, in relation to the individual soul. Virat and Hiranyagarbha are, in fact, aspects of Ishwara only.

The fourth foot is the Absolute aspect of Brahman, which is beautifully described in Mantra

seven. He is invisible, unrelated, unperceivable, undefinable, of the nature of pure Self-Consciousness, peaceful, ever-blissful, supremely auspicious, unitary, and of the fourth state (Shantam, Shivam, Adwitiyam, Chaturtham). This Upanishad enjoins "He is to be realized."

The Atman in the verbal form is OM, consisting of three syllables which are the three feet. The letters are A-U-M. Vaiswanara is A. Taijasa is U. Prajna is M. He who knows this becomes the support of all.

The transcendental unitary state of supreme bliss, devoid of all phenomenal existence is the syllableless fourth aspect of OM. It is verily the Atman. By Self one should enter the Self. This is the final teaching of this Upanishad.

Gaudapada, the great and the first exponent of Advaita philosophy who was the Acharya of Govindapada the Acharya of Sankara, brought out a Karika (commentary) on this Upanishad which became the basis of Sankara's Advaita philosophy.

Story

Man: the Crowning Glory of Creation

(*Sri Swami Sivananda*)

The cunning fox was vexed at the glorification of man, and his exalted position in God's creation. He thought within himself: "Am I in any way less intelligent than man? Or, is he less cunning than I am, when he wants to cheat others? He is a living creature just as much as I am. In fact, I am more contented than he. I don't wear costly clothes during every season. I endure heat and cold patiently. I do not ask for umbrellas to protect myself from rain. I do not put on dark glasses to prevent the glare of sunlight in summer. I do not ask for motor car or train to go from place to place. Though we, animals, possess all these qualities, and are even nobler than man in some respects, why should he be considered superior to us. I shall see that this injustice is put to an end."

He ran hither and thither and incited other animals to join him. He was able to gather a number of them. Then they all went to the elephant. The wise elephant said: "Brothers, there

is no doubt some truth in what you say. Let us then go to another forest-dweller, a hermit who lives nearby, and ascertain his views. There lives a sage in the yonder cottage. Let us go to him and represent our cases." They agreed, and approached the hermit.

"Swami, you know me well," barked the dog. "I am the symbol of gratitude. If a man beats me a thousand times and gives me a morsel of food, I remain grateful to him throughout my life, and I am ready to give up my life in his service. But, man forgets a thousand services rendered to him and remembers the one wrong thing that his friend might have done, completely ignoring the help received, he is ready to murder his kith and kin if even unwittingly. How, then, sir, you say man is superior to beast?"

And this was the cow's plea: "Man takes me to the pastures to graze. Sometimes he gives me a little straw or husk. In return I give him nourishing milk; often he starves my calf in order

to feed himself and his children with my milk. When I thus feed him and his family, he gives me shelter in a foul-smelling, unclean place at the backyard of his house. The moment I go dry, I am ill-treated and ignored. If I become old, I am driven out or sold to a butcher. Such is man whom you exalt sky-high. Please, sir, tell me why."

It was now the crow's turn: "Has man got this one quality that I possess, sir? Even if a smallest crumb of bread is thrown to me, I crow and call all my brothers and sisters and share it with them? But man does just the opposite. However much he has, he hoards still more and even goes out of his way to snatch the neighbour's bread. How can such a selfish and greedy man be exalted above me?"

The fish whispered, "Oh sage, I shall not stop calling man inferior to us; but I call him downright selfish and cruel. I cause him no harm. In fact, I serve him by keeping the ponds, tanks, lakes and rivers clean. I eat away the dirt that is thrown into the water by man. Instead of preserving such a good benefactor, selfish man catches me, kills me and eats me! Do you regard this foolish man superior to me?"

The mule brayed: "Oh sir, the fish is quite right. Look at my pitiable plight. I am a beast of burden. I am famous for the divine qualities of patience and forbearance. I bear insult and injury patiently. Without my service, the people in the hills will suffer for want of necessities of their life. I carry their food and other goods. What is my reward? Beating and more beating! Is this man superior to me?"

"Tell him everything, friends, tell him all about your qualities and your supernatural attainments," chimed in the cunning fox.

"Sir," said the deer, "the very skin over which you sit and meditate on God belongs to our kind. Have you ever heard of man's skin being put to any good use? In the matter of beauty, the most beautiful damsel's eyes are often compared to mine. My horns decorate man's drawing rooms."

"Just so," said the peacock. "My feathers are so charming that even Lord Krishna had a feather tucked into his tiara. Lord Shanmukha uses me as his Vahana; and many of his devotees and Mantra-vadis use my feathers as a magic-wand to drive off evil spirits. No one has heard of man's skin or hair being so used!"

"All my excretions have been considered holy and highly purificatory by the orthodox Hindus," said the cow. "The 'Panchagavya' is an invariable item in all holy rites of the Hindu. The very mention of human excretions will induce only vomiting in man and the least contact with them has to be followed by a thorough washing and bath."

"Can any man boast of having such an acute sense of smell as I have?" asked the dog.

"Can any man boast of having such a wonderful sense of sight as I have?" asked the kite.

"Can any man see during the night and the day with equal ease as I can?" asked the cat.

The elephant trumpeted: "I can do great things, sir. I have an enormous body. There are numberless stories of my intelligence. My tusk and my bones are converted into lovely ivory images and other items. All this is true, sir. But kindly enlighten us why man is considered superior to us. Though I do agree with the arguments of my brethren, I feel, too, that there must be some wise reason for this."

The sage said: "Listen, my kinsmen of the jungle! All that you have said is true. But God has endowed man with the sixth sense, the eye of discrimination, the Buddhi, which distinguishes the right from the wrong, the truth from the untruth, the good from the evil. You are governed by instincts. Man can attain intuition. He can control his instincts, and, through intuition, attain God-realization."

"If he doesn't?" asked the cunning fox.

"If he doesn't, he is, of course, worse than a beast. If he does, he is far superior to all else in the entire creation," said the sage.

The animals went away satisfied.

Dialogue Between Bali and Virochana

(BASED ON "YOGA-VASISHTHA")

(Dr. Lakshmi Mirchandani, MBBS, LRCP, MRCS)

Virochana: Son, you look thoughtful and worried. What ails you?

Bali: Sir, it is true I am in low spirits. I have conquered heaven and earth, but life is no different. I feel the same alternating cycles of life and death, good and bad, happiness and sorrow. In spite of my valour and wealth I find no true and permanent happiness in any of the lands that I have conquered, and know not where else to look for.

Vir: Valiant One, you have conquered all the worlds but one, and in that land alone is eternal bliss.

Bali: Tell me quickly, dearest father, where that land is, and name its ruler!

Vir: It is the Kingdom of Moksha—a land of unlimited freedom and sweet tranquillity. There is no sorrow at parting, for everything is eternal and real, or Sat. Neither is there ignorance, for the effulgence of Chit (consciousness) dispels all darkness. The inhabitants of that land have no desires, for they live in an atmosphere charged with supernatural bliss. King Atman, the Immortal Sovereign, rules this blessed land. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. One must experience His glory personally. His splendour is beyond all description. Mind is his minister who is assisted by Kama and Krodha. Though Atman is all-powerful, it is Mind that controls entry into the Kingdom of Moksha.

Bali: You have made me impatient to enter this wonderful land of Bliss. Sir, with your blessings, I shall, at this very moment, lead my valiant army into Moksha Land and see how Mind can dare to obstruct my path.

Vir: Not so fast, son, you will find yourself in a dilemma. Atman and Mind are most elusive. You cannot conquer Mind without the grace of Atman, and Atman is accessible only after the Mind is either annihilated or won over.

Bali: That should not be difficult Sir. Have I not got weapons to deal with every kind of foe?

Vir: Atman and Mind are different. They

need to be approached with strategy. I suggest a two-pronged attack, thus dealing with Atman and Mind at one and the same time.

Bali: Splendid! Please proceed, Sir.

Vir: Shraddha (faith) and Vichara or reflection upon the ultimate Truth will lead you to the gracious presence of Atman. But it is most difficult to vanquish the Mind.

Bali: Venerable father, I am most interested. Please tell me how to deal with Mind.

Vir: In dealing with Mind, destiny or fate will give you no assistance. You will have to depend on your own self-effort or Purushartha. First, you must watch and find out in what state Mind is. Should you find him enveloped in ignorance and in a state of Kshipta (wandering) or Mudha (forgetful) you need to use Yama (self-restraint), Niyama (religious observance), Asana and Pranayama, and try to bring him under Eka-grata (one-pointedness) and Niruddha (control). For this second stage of the attack on Mind, you must have sharper weapons.

Bali: And what are they, Sir?

Vir: Even after you have pierced through his shield of ignorance, Mind will try to entice you into a vicious circle, where Samskaras, Vrittis, Sankalpas, desires, cravings, Karmas, are all linked together. You can, however, break this vicious cycle and free yourself by destroying any one of these links. (The first weapon to use now is Viveka, or discrimination, arising out of knowledge. This throws a flood of light on Mind and enables you to see his vulnerable points. Remember he has powerful friends in Kama and Krodha (desire and anger), and can create Raga (attachment) and Dvesha (hatred) who will obstruct your path.)

Bali: How should one deal with these foes, Sir?

Vir: Dispassion and detachment can deal with Raga and Dvesha. With the help of Viveka they can bring out the defects of all sense-objects. Then

Raga automatically dies, and Dwesha cannot exist alone.

Bali: What about Kama and Krodha, noble Sir?

Vir: Krodha is dependent on Kama. When Kama is destroyed, Krodha will also die. Kama is destroyed by renunciation. But this is a long drawn out process. At first you must palliate him, but through Viveka you can let him see for himself the futility of all sense-gratification. It is no use suppressing Kama or desires. When you least expect it, they will spring up and rebel. You have to destroy them in *toto*. Hence renunciation cannot be forged in a day. It has to be gradual and requires Abhyasa or practice to shape it into a strong and lasting weapon. For the proper guidance of Abhyasa, a Guru and Satsang are essential. During this period of Abhyasa, you must focus your mind less and less on your bodily needs and more and more on the service of Guru and the study of scriptures, till at last your consciousness becomes at one with the universal consciousness. But, son, remember one thing! When

all is said and done, Mind is not a bad fellow. It is his friends, Kama and Krodha that are really dangerous. In fact, if you approach Mind properly he will be a true friend. When you have guided him into Ekagrata or Niruddha, he will be of immense help to you and will lead you through concentration, meditation and Vichara till you come into the very presence of the Immortal Atman. He will then quietly retreat and disappear. Atman, whose grace you will have already won by faith, contemplation and Vichara, will welcome you into the land of Moksha. But I may add one thing. Before entering upon this adventure for gaining entrance into the Kingdom of Moksha, you must make sure that you are really disgusted with your present state. No half-hearted efforts will succeed. First, introspect well, and then make up your mind.

Bali: I am most grateful to you, Sir. I shall do as you have said and think over the matter carefully.

Vir: May God bless you and may you succeed in your enterprise in search of the land of Moksha.

Vivekachudamani

(*Sri Swami Narayanandas*)

समाहितान्तःकरणः स्वरूपे

विलोकयात्मानम् खण्डवैभवम् ।

विच्छिन्नित्वं बन्धं भवत्यगन्धितं

यत्नेन पुंस्त्वं सफलीकुरुष्व ॥४१॥

411. Perceive that infinite glory within yourself with one-pointed mind, restrained in the Atman, and cut asunder the bondage which is flavoured by the smell of Samsara by great effort, so that your human life may be a success.

Notes:—समाहितान्तःकरणः=with concentrated mind; स्वरूपे=in one's own nature; विलोकय=see; आत्मानम्=self; अखण्डवैभवम्=infinite glory; विच्छिन्नित्वं=cut asunder; बन्धम्=bondage; भवत्यगन्ध=smell of samsara; गन्धितम्=flavoured; यत्नेन=by effort; पुंस्त्वम्=man's birth; सफलीकुरुष्व=make it a success.

Commentary: Of all embodiments, the human body is highly praised in the scriptures because it is very rarely obtained. The intellect, the guiding principle in one's life, is present in the human being, endowed with which man knows what is good for him and what is not. Other creations of the Lord do not possess this special gift. They have got only instinctive knowledge. This special knowledge or the Buddhi Tattwa, is given only to man. On account of this, the human body is considered to be the gateway to liberation. One who misses this chance of attaining to Moksha after getting this human body is really a great loser and an unwise creature. Here, in this verse, we are reminded of our supreme glory.

The word 'Yatnena' is used to show that it is rather difficult to attain the highest, except by great effort. The difficulty in acquiring it is pointed out but we are given a hope that it can be acquired. It draws attention to the fact that it

is not unattainable.

For the attainment of the highest knowledge one should possess an one-pointed mind. You cannot see your face reflected clearly in disturbed water. There should be complete stillness.

बुद्धोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं सच्चिदानन्दमद्ययम् ।

भावयात्मानमानस्थं न भूयः कल्पसेऽध्वने ॥४१२॥

412. Contemplate on the self which is within you, which is free from all limitations, which is existence, knowledge and bliss absolute, in which there is no second thing. Thou shalt never again come across the cycle of births and deaths.

Notes:—सब=all; उपाधि=limitations; विनिर्मुक्तम्=freed; सच्चिदानन्दमद्ययम्=the non-dual Satchidananda; भावय=meditate; आत्मानम्=self; आत्मस्थम्=seated in oneself; न=not; भूयः=again; कल्पसे=you come across; अध्वने=the cycle of births and deaths.

Commentary: “The Self within you” indicates not that the self is not present in other places or that it is limited to the heart, but that one has to shut one’s ears to outside sounds, close the eyes to outside distractions and dive deep in the Atman within, which is free from all kinds of modifications. The Atman is ever peaceful. It has to be realized in peace and silence by one-pointed meditation.

छायेव पुः सः परिदृश्यमान—
माभासरूपेण फलानुभूत्या ।
शरीरमाराञ्छवविनिरस्त
पुनर्वं संधत्त इदं महात्मा ॥४१३॥

413. The high-souled sage never again accepts the body which has been rejected by him as a corpse, though it is seen like the shadow of a man on account of his unfructified Karmas (actions).

Notes:—छाया=shadow; इव=like; पुः=of man; परिदृश्यमानम्=that which is seen; आभासरूपेण=by reflection; फलानुभूत्या=by the enjoyment of fruits; शरीरम्=body; आरात्=verily; शववत्=like dead body; निरस्तम्=rejected; पुनः=again; न=not; संधत्ते=accept;

इदम्=this; महात्मा=great man.

Commentary: The body that is seen is as essenceless as the shadow of a man. The nature of Vairagya is discussed here. It should be as intense as aversion to a dead body. The body has really no charm as is seen from the experience of a dead body. Even while alive you should regard it as impermanent and get rid of all attachment to it.

The body is another name for Prarabda Karma. By knowledge of the Self, in Samadhi, the identification with the body ceases, as even the Prarabda is destroyed. Just as a burnt rope appears to be real in all outward appearances but does not serve the purposes of a rope, even so, the physical body of the Jnani is as unreal and unuseful to him in so far as its relation to the sense-objects, in a binding sense, is concerned.

सततविमलबोधानन्दरूपं समेत्य
त्यज जडमलरूपोपाधिमेतं सुदूरे ।
अथ पुनरपि नैष स्मर्यतां वान्तवस्तु
स्मरणविषयमृते कल्पते कुत्सनाय ॥४१४॥

414. Having attained the state of pure knowledge, leave at a distance this superimposition (on Self), the inert (body). Think of it not again as though it is an object once vomited owing to retching, even when it is brought to memory once again.

Notes:—सततं=always; विमलबोधानन्दरूपम्=pure knowledge, form of; समेत्य=attaining; त्यज=leave aside; जड़=inert; मल=impure; रूप=form; उपाधिम्=superimposition; एतम्=this; सुदूरे=at a distance; अथ=now; पुनरपि=again; न=not; एषः=this; स्मर्यताम्=think of; वान्तवस्तु=vomited thing; स्मरणविषयमृतम्=the object of remembrance; कल्पते=is fit; कुत्सनाम्=for condemnation.

Commentary: Once one realizes the supreme Atman, the physical body, which was so far an object of love and attachment, will create disgust. It would appear in its true form—a bundle of foul and dirty components. Just think of the composition of the physical body, especially of the state

when life departs. It becomes the most disgusting and foul object in a few hours. You will have nothing but aversion for the physical body then,

which was very dear when alive. It is only due to your ignorance that the body appears to you as an object of enjoyment.

True Interpreter of Yoga

(Mrs. A. Hooton, Hongkong)

[The following is a discourse (reported briefly in the previous issue) by Mrs. A. Hooton, wife of the Solicitor General to the Government of Hongkong, given at a meeting held last September to commemorate the 72nd birthday of Sri Swami Sivananda. The meeting was held by the Yoga Institute, the Colony's Branch of the Divine Life Society.]

I have not had the privilege of meeting Swami Sivananda, and I imagine that very few of us present this evening have had that privilege. What most of us know of him comes from what we have heard, what we have read and what we have seen and experienced of his work.

In 1936 Swami Sivananda founded, at Rishikesh, the Divine Life Society, and thereafter he founded, or caused to be founded, branches of that Society in various parts of the world. Our branch was founded last year. By forming these branches he has made available to the man in the street the practice of Yoga and the benefits which result from such practice. Thanks to him, the mystery and ignorance relating to Yoga has largely been dispersed.

A year ago this branch celebrated, for the first time in the Colony, the birthday of Swami Sivananda. We did so shortly after the visit to us of Swami Vishnudevananda, and the cynic might well then have thought that the acclaim given was born of novelty and the personality of Swami Vishnudevananda, that Yoga was a fashion which would quickly pass. Time has however proved that such a view was without foundation, because, during the year which has just passed, more and more persons have started and kept up the practice of Yoga, notwithstanding the fact that there has been no Swami physically present to give instruction. Indeed, I understand that nowhere outside India has so much enthusiasm been shown as in Hongkong.

I think, therefore, the greatest tribute which can be paid to our Founder-President, on his birthday, lies in acknowledging that the innate strength of his teachings is such that, once the seed is sown, it cannot help but bear fruit.

He has indeed broken down the erroneous conception that Yoga is a way of life for the few and not for the multitude. Thanks to him, it is now known that to follow the path of Yoga it is unnecessary to turn one's back on the world and live a hermit's life of solitude. Thanks to him, it is now generally appreciated that Yoga is simply a system of physical, mental and spiritual training which helps man to gain control over his body and mind, and thereby reach upwards towards knowledge of his higher Self and the Spirit.

The daily practice of a dozen or so Asanas and a few breathing exercises does not require a hermit's cottage or cave for their performance. Selfless service to others in one's work can indeed only be practised if one sticks to one's job. Forms of Yoga can, therefore, be practised whilst still attending to the cares of office, factory, business or family. This is a great part of Swami Sivananda's message to us.

Another part of his message is that Yoga is not a religion in the sense of being a sect or cult of religion set up in addition to or opposition to the established orders. On the contrary, every student of Yoga is encouraged to continue and, indeed, intensify his worship of God in the church, temple or other place to which he is accustomed to go. His love of God and understanding of God's ways, whatever is his religion, cannot but be strengthened by treading the path of Yoga.

I am confident all of us wish Swami Sivananda a happy birthday and would desire to send him our wishes for continued good health and our hopes that he may long remain on earth to help us in our lives.

What is Nirvana?

(*Sri Swami Sivananda*)

Nihilistic interpretation of the highest Spiritual Experience results from a two-fold error: one, a fundamental mistake in the approach of the aspiring Consciousness to the ultimate status of its own Being as the illimitable, indivisible, inexpressible, attributeless Reality; two, a purely intellectual essay at grasping what must for ever remain in the domain of the Ineffable.

Nirvana is the most blessed and supreme state of absolute freedom and conscious Eternal Life, not a mere conviction, nor yet a postulate of speculative philosophic boldness, but actual being. Being the Being is Nirvana: it is a state where the principle of individuality is dissolved in unconditioned Existence, a state of the realization of the Real where every construction of the consciousness is cancelled, where the Mind is of the Formless Form of the Featureless Absolute.

Transcending as it does even the sense of immortality which also is conceptual, Nirvana is that experience of the Light of the Absolute that puts a sudden end to all relative existence, and there neither the world nor the self exist even as a vague remembrance.

It is the complete dissolution of Thought in simple Existence. It is the awful grandeur of utter negation of limitations and the limiting power of Consciousness. It is an immediate here and now of spacelessness and timelessness, the inexpressible, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond knowledge and ignorance, beyond life and death, beyond what is manifest and what is unmanifest, beyond all that is beyond!

If ever a positive formulation of the indescribable Nature of the Nirvanic Experience is to be made, it should be stated that it is the Realization of the conditionless condition of the completest Consciousness, the fullest Reality, the immensest Power, the intensest Delight.

Truth, knowledge, power, happiness and immortality are Its shadows. It is not love, nor grace, nor world, nor soul, nor God, nor freedom nor light,—for all these are relative conceptions,

and It is Something which oversteps the boundaries of being and nullifies all ideas of existence.

It is not Satchidananda which is only the logical highest, a mere intellectual prop for the grasp of that which has no name, submits itself to no definition, presents itself neither as form nor as content nor yet as existent. Satchidananda is only an ideal 'other' of what we here experience, and Reality is that which is beyond Satchidananda also.

It is the supreme Death of all, the total annihilation of everything, yet, It is the highest peak of Real Life, the Wisdom of wisdom, the Joy of joy, the Power of power, the Real of the real. The Upanishads have sought to give intuitive formulations to the majestic Absolute-Experience of Brahma-Nirvana in these immortal statements: "The knower of the Self, crosses beyond sorrow;" "the knower of Brahman, attains the Highest;" "he returns not again, he returns not again."

By knowing the Supreme Being, the wise one casts off both joy and sorrow, puts an end to the circle of transmigratory life, breaks the knot of the 'heart,' steps over all phenomenal manifestation and experience, has the wholé of the constitution of his individuality unified in the Supreme Impershable.

As rivers enter the ocean, leaving name and form, so the wise one liberated from name and form, reaches the Transcendental Divine Being. This is Immortality, the Barhma-Nirvana. This is the Immediate Liberation, the instantaneous experience of the Absolute through the sudden destruction of the fabric of personality built by Avidya, Kama and Karma.

Karma is the child of Kama which is never fulfilled until its source, Avidya, is transcended through the realization of Brahman which is unsurpassed perfection. How can, by knowing one thing, another thing be attained? The attainment and the knowledge here are the same, self-identical. The Supreme Brahman is the All; the liberated Soul becomes the All; and, the experience

of the Pure Being is the criterion of Liberation.

Nirvana, then, is the processless immediate experience of the relationless, spaceless, timeless Brahman,—an experience resulting from one's habituation to the non-dual knowledge of the Self. Nirvana is the absolute Experience lifted beyond all scope in itself for the operation of any objec-

tive power, for an awareness of anything other than Itself, and even of the awareness of Itself as Itself; it is a Transcendental Experience, impossible of conception, impossible of expression, free from the differentiation of Knower, the Knowledge and the Known, a very unique experience which puts an end to the relative notions of Ishwara, Jiva and Jagat.

MAHARSHI RAMANA

It is given to very few to realize Brahman in this way. The most telling illustration of this type of realization was found in Maharshi Ramana, whose life was a consummate manifestation of Nirvanic experience. He says in *Ulladu Narpadu*: "That only is true Knowledge in which there is no knowing or not knowing. To know is not true knowledge. The Self is Knowledge, for It shines (alone) with nothing else to know or to make known; It is not a negation (then)."

The central theme of Ramana's teachings was: "I am against nothing except the ego, the 'I'-ness, which is the root of all evil. Rend this and you

land into the lap of the one Reality. That is the one solution to all questioning."

That "landing into the lap of the one Reality," as a logical effect of a long pursuit in contemplation of the nature of the Self within, as a result of an enquiry ("Who am I?") by the inner self-reflective consciousness, as a reward of highest *jnana-anubhava*, without the least awareness that one has that *anubhava* and without the least awareness that one has "landed into the lap of the one Reality,"—that is Nirvana and that is the greatest Truth lived by Sri Ramana, and that is the greatest Message he has bequeathed to aspiring humanity.

Sivananda's 'Upadeshamala' in Danish

(Translated by Sri Edgar Sodring, Copenhagen)

[Continued from Sept.-Oct. Issue]

51. Mod tappert det værste, kaemp modigt
for det bedste.
52. Altting i Verden har en lys Side.
53. Forsøg altid at se paa Tingenes lyse Side.
54. Verden er som et spejl. Hvis du smiler,
smiler den. Hvis du er bister, er den bister.
55. En dyr Hustru gor Manden taenk som.
56. Fysisk Skonhed nær kun til Hudens.
57. Straeb efter Fuldendthed i alle Ting.
58. Dyrk Hensynsfuldhed mod andres Folel-
ser.
59. En dydig Handling gaar aldrig tabt.
60. Den, som saar Hoflighed, hoster Venskab.
61. Den, som planter Venlighed, samler Kaer-
lighed.
62. Ungdommen er Lejligheden til store
Handler og til at blive stor.
63. Tal ikke uden at tænke, handl ikke uden
at reflektere.
64. Det er bedre ta tabe end at spille falsk.
65. Unge Maend synes gamle Maend er dum-
me, og gamle Maend ved, at yngre Maend er det.
66. Livet er tornefyldt og Ungdommen for-
faengelig. En viis Mand naar Fuldkommenhed.
67. En doven Mand er Tiggerens aeldre Bror.
68. Ladhed er Sultens Mor og Tyvens Helbror.
69. Hverken Rigdom eller Rang sikrer Lyk-
ke.
70. Lykken er indvendig.
71. Et skyldigt Sind mistaenker altid andre.
72. Sorg omhyggeligt for Enkelthederne.
73. Nil desperandum, fortvivl aldrig, haeng i.
74. Tas omhyggeligt pa dine Lidenskaber.
75. Baer prompt i Udforelsen af altting.
76. Jag aldrig efter Penge.

(To be continued)

Ashram News and Notes

From 11th to 16th November, the Ashram celebrated the Skanda-Shashthi, or the six-day festival of Sri Kartikeya, or Subramanya, who occupies an important position as a War-God in the Hindu pantheon. This occasion is celebrated every year, especially in South India, to mark the victory of the Devas over the Asuras, the former being saved from oppression and subjugation by the latter under the glorious leadership in battle of Sri Skanda. Esoterically speaking, the occasion implies victory over the evil forces by the positive divine forces, or the conquest of the lower nature by the Overself, its army being holy aspiration, spiritual discipline and virtuous qualities.

On all the six days, there were special worship with Archana, and chanting of appropriate Stotras, and study of Sri Swami Sivananda's *Lord Shanmukha and His Worship*.

DISCOURSES

Dr. N.N. Mukherjee, of Calcutta, gave a series of discourses on the "Concept of the Divine Mother," "Gajendra Moksha," and the "Philosophy of Bhakti," in the first half of November.

On 12th November, Sri P.R. Pather, of Durban, spoke on the activities of the Divine Life Society in South Africa and the social and political problems of the Union.

MUSIC PERFORMANCES

On his visit to the Ashram in the last week of the month under review, Sri Parvatikarji Maharaj gave some highly inspiring music performances on Swaramandali and Rudra-Veena.

Among the other visitors who gave special music performances were Srimati Kalyani Varadarajan (violin and veena), Kumari Kripa Varadarajan (vocal), Captain and Srimati Chari (vocal) and Srimati Lalita Balasubramaniam (flute), all in Karnatik style.

VISITING STUDENTS

Several groups of students and teachers from

different parts of the country visited the Ashram and received blessings and instructions from Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. For many of them special Satsangas were arranged, when they had the opportunity of singing the divine name and listening to devotional music, and holy teachings. They are mentioned below:

5th November: About 80 students and a few teachers of the Kabibhai High School, Bombay.

5th: 26 students from Vidya Bhavan Rural Institute, Udaipur, led by Principal Agarwal.

6th: About 90 students and a few teachers of Nootan Sarva Vidyalaya, Visnagar, Gujarat.

8th: 38 students of Sarvajanik Agricultural High School, Abrama.

26th: About 35 teachers and students of the Mahadevi Girls College, Dehra Dun, led by Kumari Pushpa Anand.

A batch of 30 members of the Puttur Branch of the Divine Life Society visited the Ashram on 3rd November.

OTHER VISITORS

Among others who visited the Ashram during the month under review were Sri Sivananda Nilakantan and family; Dr. N.N. Mukherjee and Sri N.C. Ghosh, from Calcutta; Sri James C. Stewart and Srimati Margaret Stewart, from Hongkong; and Sri B.D. Tiwari, Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Swami Sivananda Radha and Joe Gnilka have arrived at the Ashram. It may be recalled that Swami Sivananda Radha was here in 1955 and '56 and received initiation from Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. On 1st December, at the night Satsanga, Swami Sivananda Radha gave a detailed account of her efforts at spreading the teachings of Swamiji in Canada and her activities at the newly established Ashram at Burnaby, near Vancouver, B.C. Earlier, some coloured slides pertaining thereto were screened.

All-India Divine Life Conference at Bangalore

BANGALORE, Nov. 16.

Inaugurating the eleventh session of the All-India Divine Life Conference at Visvesvarapuram, this morning, Chief Minister Jatti said that development of spirituality had a vital role in the building of a welfare society in which task everyone was engaged today. Welfare society, he said, required peace and orderly life, and the practice of spirituality by every citizen alone could ensure that. Neither legislation nor administrative measure could bring peaceful and contented life.

Mr. Jatti explained that development of the real kind of spirituality was possible by everyone who was prepared to subject his daily conduct to introspection and correction.

Mr. R. R. Diwakar, former Governor of Bihar, unveiled the portrait of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Mr. Diwakar said man required spiritual solace today more than ever, for at no time he was so much obsessed by fear as he was today. The tremendous material progress, achieved as a result of advancement of science, instead of removing or minimizing man's fear had increased it greatly. That was on account of the imbalance between material progress and spiritual development.

Sri Kaviyogi Maharshi Shuddhananda Bharati of Madras, who presided over the conference, stressed the need for doing away with the personality cult in religion which had divided mankind. India especially had been torn to pieces by hundreds of castes and religious camps. What was required was a determined effort to remove the dogmatic walls around their religious personalities and make religion a unifying force and creative force.

The Swamiji said even today they could see that humanity was slowly moving towards that ultimate unity of God, soul and the world, the fulcrum point of which was otherwise called *yoga*, which could be achieved by *vedanta*. Perfect bliss, perfect consciousness, perfect truth and light were the aims of *veda dharma* and *yoga* was the means to attain them. *Yoga-vedanta* was a perfect path

leading to the highest height of pure self-identity called *kevala advaita*.

Earlier, M. Y. Ramachandra, Mayor of Bangalore and Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates and others. He said the Divine Life Society had 200 branches in India and an equal number abroad.

Gen. K. M. Cariappa, former C-in-C of the Indian Army, who also spoke, paid eloquent tributes to the spiritual personality and teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda and stated that if his gospel of universal love and brotherhood were practised by everyone, world peace and happiness of mankind would become a reality.

He also announced that the Swamiji had blessed the holding of the 12th conference in Coorg next year.

Major K. S. G. Sastry read messages received on the occasion.

The three-day conference began with a prayer and Sankirtan early this morning and flag-hoisting by Swami Abhedanandaji of Trivandrum.

The large gathering, included 100 delegates from all over the country and about dozen representatives of Divine Life Societies in England, Africa, Australia and Ceylon.

The Conference was held in a beautifully decorated pandal with an accommodation capacity of 6,000 persons. There were open areas all around, and even during slack hours (mid-day) no less than 4,000 persons attended, whereas in the evening hours the number of the audience was 10,000.

A steady programme of discourses, Sankirtan and Bhajan held the attention of the participants on all the three days.

Free literature containing Sri Swami Sivananda's teachings in English, Tamil and Kannada was distributed among thousands, which included 12,000 copies of *Bhajanavali* in three languages and 30,000 folders.

The delegates camp was situated in a spacious building near the pandal.

On the last day, at night, a grand procession with Sri Gurudev's photo in a tastefully decorated

and electrically illuminated chariot was taken around the main streets adjoining the venue of the Conference. The special features of the procession were Kavadi dance, Nadaswaram and band music, besides Sankirtan.

On the fourth day, over 1,500 persons were treated to a feast.

The daily programme of the Conference commenced at 4.30 a.m., with common prayer, Japa and meditation.

The ladies programme on the third day was presided over by Dr. Sivananda Sundari, of Puttur.

On the same day, Sri K.S. Ramaswami Sastry presided over a delegates' meeting, in which Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati and Sri Swami Satchidananda participated, the latter being a prominent organizer of the camp and Co-ordinator of the

Branches of the Divine Life Society.

The credit for holding the All-India Divine Life Conference goes to Tasker Town and Visweswarapuram Branches of the D.L. Society, which were assisted by the Mysore and Nilasandra Branches. Among others who took a prominent part in the organization work was Sri V.L. Nagaraj of the Tasker Town Branch.

The Tasker Town Branch published five books of Sri Swami Sivananda, viz., *Japa Yoga*, *Sivananda Saktigalu* and *Sivananda Vani*, in Kannada, and *Light-Power-Wisdom*, in English and Tamil, to mark the occasion.

A Souvenir, containing the proceedings of the Conference and other specially contributed articles, besides the papers read at the sessions, is being published.

News from Abroad

SIVANANDA SCHOOL OF YOGA HAMBURG

The Sivananda School of Yoga, Hamburg, which is actively disseminating the knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta in Germany, is now publishing its official periodical entitled *Gottliche Botschaft (Divine Message)*, the recent Birthday Number being a special issue dealing on the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda. The School of Yoga is conducted by Sri N.W. Saraf, an able, enthusiastic and sincere disciple of Sri Swamiji. It is situated at Keilortalle 9 (Hamburg 13, West Germany).

ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM FRANKLIN WOLSEY

Archbishop William Franklin Wolsey, President of International Academy, Burnaby, B.C., Canada, is closely associated with Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in his efforts at fostering universal brotherhood, mutual understanding and the commonly applicable ethical and spiritual ideals of Jesus Christ.

The International Academy is affiliated with the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy and works for the attainment of identical objective. Archbishop Wolsey appreciates the writings and the activities of Sri Swami Sivananda, and himself is a sincere,

unbiased missionary of the common ideals of religion and spirituality.

The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy wishes all success to his noble endeavours and a bright career of usefulness and service to the International Academy. May God bless the Archbishop!

GITA CLASSES AT PERTH

Regular Gita classes are held by Sri R.T. Werther, President of the Divine Life Society Branch at Perth, West Australia. The Gita course is for 18 months and is attended by about 100 students. It may be recalled that Sri Werther stayed at Sivanandanagar for some months nearly three years ago. He is a devoted spiritual aspirant, a distinguished teacher of western music and a sincere disciple of Sri Swamiji.

SOUTH AFRICA

At a Council Meeting of the Branches of the Divine Life Society of South Africa, the following have been elected to serve on the Board of Governors to direct the activities of the Society in the

Union:

Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri S.R. Padayachie (Umkomas), Swami Brahmananda and Sri Bhiksa Chiba (Pretoria), Sri Amritlal Dalpatram (Johannesburg), Sri M. Peruman, Sri B. Rambiritch and

Sri M.S. Reddy (Tongaat), Sri M.G. Moodley (Maritzburg), Sri D.N. Maharaj, Sri S. Ponen, Sri R.S. Pather, Sri N. Gopaul, Sri R. Sewpaul, Sri S. Bridgemohan, Sri V.S. Pillay, Sri Narandas Dayal and Sri V. Srinivasan (Durban).

SIVANANDA SUSHILA VIGNAY

After having toured in Indonesia, on her way back from Tokyo and Hongkong, Srimati Sivananda Sushila Vignay kept the schedule of an extensive lecture programme in the Federation of Malaya. At various places, such as Singapore,

Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, Perak, Klang, Ipoh and Penang, she was given a cordial reception by the Branches of the Divine Life Society which arranged numerous meetings for her discourses on the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda, his life and mission, as well as on the various aspects of Yoga and Vedanta. Srimati Sivananda Sushila is a devoted disciple of Sri Swamiji and is a doctor of medicine by profession. During her several visits to Sivanandanagar, she has taken a keen interest in attending on the patients at Sivananda General Hospital.

The Divine Life Index

(VOLUME XX—1958)

	Pages		Pages
FROM THE SCRIPTURES			
Ashwaghosha's Doctrine of Suchness	97	Guru and Disciple	146
Autumn Floods	121	Hints on Sadhana in Epics and Puranas	99
Cosmic Being, the	145	Highest Duty, the Ideal of	49
Great Learning, the	1	Influence of Diet on Human Propensities	7
Krishna, Gospel of Sri	169	India, Cultural Unification of	51,78
Lao-Tze, Meditations of	9	Important Hints to Yoga Students	81
Mahavira's Sayings	73	Indian Spiritual Inheritance, the Spirit of	218
St. Francis of Assisi, Prayer of	387	Kumaraguruparar, Saint	141
CONTRIBUTIONS BY SWAMI SIVANANDA			
Ajnana, the Seven Stages of	10	Live to Serve	74
Advice to Girls	88	Letters of Sivananda	294
Adhyatma Sutras	124	Meditation, Light on	172
Aurobindo, Sri	159	Mystery of Mysteries	61
Awake, Arise and Know Thyself	202	Mind, Conquest of	130
Bhakti Yoga, On	395	Nirvana, What is	402
Bible, My Favourite Chapter in the	102	Peace, Path of	240
Crest-Jewel Among Lady Saints	108	Prayers to the Lord	209
Call of the Eternal	123	Prayer, What is	86
Call of the Christ	387	Peace, Message of	132
Choice Before Humanity	256	Questions and Answers	323
Culture and Civilization	229	Revelations of Sivananda	249
Divine Nature, Unfold Thy	2	Realization of Sivananda	233
Duty of Sadhus	138	Shanti Devi (A Case of Rebirth)	40
Divine Life Society, Ideals of	124	Spiritual "Awakeners"	107
Epitome of Sivananda's Teachings	332	Sivananda Lahari	355, 390
Ethical Idealism Before the Indian Youth	303	True Nature of Victory	369
Education of the Child	128	Tapovanji Maharaj, Swami	136
Goodness in the Path to God	25	Vegetarianism, Hindu Ideals of	156
God Bless Gen. Cariappa	Apr. IV	Vijnana Yoga of the Bhagavadgita	361
		World Philosophers Congress	253
		Yoga and Health Culture	155
		Yoga, Every Action a Step in	170

	Pages		Pages
PARABLES AND STORIES			
BY SWAMI SIVANANDA			
Man vs Beast	396	Mundaka Upanishad - D. S. Krishnaiyer	131
Maya and the Magician	108	Mind, Upliftment of - S. N. Rao	173
Renunciation, Test of	279	My Sadhana and Spiritual Experiences	
Shadow and Substance	107	- An Aspirant	33
Treasure Beneath Pillow	18	Obiter Dicta	14
Treasure, Hidden	34	Plato, Idealism of - J. N. Kullar	54
Whatever God Does is All for Good	317	Play of Gunas, Historical Evidence in the	
You Cannot Deceive God	15	- Sadananda	58
MESSAGES BY SWAMI SIVANANDA			
Birthday	202	Perception, Vedantic Theory of	
Bharat Sadhu Samaj Training Camp	138	- Ram Rup Tiwari	149
Christmas	387	Realization, Pathway to - M. H. Syed	63
Czechoslovakia, to the People of	138	Renunciation, Spirit of - Krishnananda	82
Durban Branch, for the Inauguration of	123	Sanskrit, the Unifying Link in Indian Culture	
Guru Purnima	146	- S. Radhakrishnan	151
Idd	133	Swetasvatara Upanishad - D. S. Krishnaiyer	175
Krishna Janmashtami	170	Sankaracharya, Philosophy of	
Navaratri	369	- C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar	357
New Year	2	Sita's Application of Inter-State Law	
One-World Message	274	- A. S. Nataraja Ayyar	364
Ramanavami	49	Saint, Who is a - Sadananda	203
Sivaratri	25	Sufism and Hindu Mysticism - C. M. Menon	100
World Peace Conference	132, 240	Spiritual Evolution and the New Age	
Yoga Health Seminar	155	- C. M. Menon	68
ON SWAMI SIVANANDA AND HIS MISSION			
CONTRIBUTIONS BY OTHERS		Wisdom of a Skull (Chinese Story)	134
Appayya Dikshita, Life Story of		Sivananda and Jesus Christ - D. Fergie	10
- Y. Mahalinga Sastri	161	- A Modern Sannyasi - Shantilal Mehta	11
Bali and Virochana, Dialogue Between		- A Vignette - Sarada Menon	318
- Lakshmi Mirchandani	393	- And Indian Yoga - E. Kulsrud	28
Bhakti Yoga - Pat Pearson	126	- And World Crisis - L. C. Davis	241
Conditioned Reflexes and Awakening of the		- And the Parliament of Religions	
Spirit - M. S. Kelkar	182	- Chidananda	280
Cultural Plan of Life - Madhavatirtha		- And Indian Culture - R. Padma	286
Evolution, Process of - S. Krishna Rao	278	- And World Peace - Sobha Tankha	289
Evil Propensities and their Control		- Ashtakam - R. Rajagopal	197
- Ram Murti Misra	30	- Dynamic Mystic - H. Chaudhuri	231
Faith, Premises of - N. S. Karanath		- Eight Verses on - V. G. P. Iyer	309
God, Religion and Realization		- Eminent Poets' Garland for - B. D. Tiwari	268
- Leslie Shephard	84	- Fundamental Significance of His Mission	
Hero and Saint - M. M. Bhattacharya		- Louis Hlavacek	222
Jambukumara - Puran Chand Samsookha		- For East and West - L. Shephard	205
Mandukya Upanishad - D. S. Krishnaiyer	389	- Goodness Incarnate - H. Dickman	277
	186	- Godly Abode of - Chela	215
	395	- Glimpses of - I. Troja	185

	Pages		Pages
— His Mission in Africa - L. Mullet	62	In Search of God at Sivanandashram - Abul Kalam	35
— His Gift to Modern Mankind - Siva Prem	75	Jaundice, a Strange Case of - Venkatesananda	44
— His Teachings - Paul Baschung	254	Living "Sun" on Earth - D. V. Rajan	298
— His "Egectomy" - Venkatesananda	341	Lord Who Showed Me Light - S. Krishnamurti	329
— His Contribution to Hinduism - K. S. Ramaswami Sastri	362	Light on the Spiritual Path - Franz von Ponct	276
— Homage of the Nation to	198	Living Spiritual Luminary - Jean Herbert	212
— In Defence of - Col. A. N. S. Murthi	228	Lively Synthesis of Diverse Creeds - O. M. Kalyanasundaram	230
— Lessons of Goodwill from - Mirza Ahmed Ali	214	My Beloved Swami, Miracles of - E. Glatthaar	210
— My Invisible God Found in - J. J. Contractor	313	Meeting with Gurudev - P. C. Das	271
— My Lord - Pat Pearson	13	Miracles of Guru Bhagavan - Satchidananda Prasad	315
— On Students and Culture	178	Our Guide Leads Us On - Van Beest	236
— Octade - J. S. Rawal	293	One Who Radiates Divine Love - Beryl Billet	250
— Philosophical Mould of - S. N. Tipnis	242	Our Miraculous Guru Bhagavan - K. V. Subba Rao Chaudhary	330
— Personality of - M. M. Bhattacharya	11	Oracle of Love - Raghuraj Singh	312
— Renunciation of - Chidananda	157	Prophet of Real Religion - V. Narayana Mallaya	340
Sahasranama Stotram, a Critique - M. Ramakrishna Bhat	Apr. III	Promoter of Peace and Love - E. P. M. Owooh	239
— Stotram - Bhagavatananda	193	Prayer to the Divine Guru - Desraj Mahendra	255
— the Modern Janaka - D. S. Krishnaiyer	301	Practical Spiritual Master - Marianne Sollinger	267
— What One Must Learn from - Sadananda	245	Preceptor is God-Incarnate - Chandulal Patel	291
— Why I Go to - Ramachandra Rao	296	Perfect Divine Personality - Maj.-Gen. A. N. Sharma	211
Abode of Bliss, My Life in the - Marianne Sollinger	77	Revealer of Culture - L. Mirchandani	226
Aristocrat Among Spiritual Intelligentsia - J. E. Ibelegbu	255	Self-Effulgent Spiritual Light - N. Scheierman	269
Apostle of Goodness - Hridayananda	235	Sivanandavedapadamala - T. N. Ramachandran	273
About My Spiritual Father - M. Somanah	310	Sage Who Has Stirred the World - Bindeswari Prasad	283
Birthday Felicitations - R. Srinivasan	331	Significant Now, the - F. Barker	27
Birthday Offerings - Namananda	326	Siva's Message, Indonesia Hails - R. S. Soekanto	89
Boon to Humanity - S. Krishna Rao	243	Satguru Navamanimala - S. Gopala Sastri	195
Cosmic Benefactor - M. C. Bhandari	297		
Denmark School of Yoga, Greetings from Great Yogi - Chandmal Munot	288		
Great Man of Action - B. L. Atreya	322		
Guru, Communion with - Hanna Herrmann	290		
Guru and Disciple - B. G. Adhwaryoo	248		
Great Spiritual Leader of Mankind - James Milroy	237		
Himalayan Splendour - Suddhananda Bharati	227		
Hercules Aged Seventy-Two - N. C. Ghosh	217		
Homage to Our Adorable Master - Lori Goehl	327		
In His Footsteps - Hansraj Chadha	301		
In Gratitude - Pat Pearson	302		
	309		

	Pages		Pages
Sivanandashram - L. Shephard	207	Branch Reports	144, 406
Saint, Tribute to a		Book Reviews	19, 72, 91, 188, 382
- K. S. Ramaswami Sastri	213	Construction of Kutir, Details of	Jul. IV
Twentieth Century Saviour - Irwin Troja	224	Divine Life Conference at Patna	372
Thinker and Writer - Hiralal Mehta	252	—at Bangalore	405
Torch-Bearer of Godly Wisdom		Diary, First Prize for the Best	42
- K. R. Acharya	300	European Divine Life Society	90
True Interpreter of Yoga - A. Hooton	401	Important Events in the Progress of	
Unique Ways of Our Master		Sivinanda's Mission	344
- M. Ram Mohan	251	Personality, Transfer of	165
Unique Universal Teacher		Sivananda Jayanti	374-382
- V. S. Krishnaswamy	223	Worthy Candidate for Nobel Peace Prize	
World-Teacher - Viony Vihari	308	- J. T. Fernandez	Jan. II
Why Sivananda is Respected and Loved		Yoga through Music	Mar. IV
- Indrajit Sharma	270	Yoga-Vedanta Forest University	75
Wise Man of the Age - Indrajit Sharma	87		
Your Spiritual Home - Venkatesananda	285		
Yoga, Greatest Living Exponent of		S E R I A L	
- M. K. Spencer	201	Vivekachudamani	16, 39, 66, 85, 105, 139, 160, 370, 399.

ON SWAMI SIVANANDA-HRIDAYANANDA

Above the Battle - R. Padma	113
Crest-Jewel Among Lady Saints	
- Swami Sivananda	108
Ideal of Indian Womanhood - N. C. Ghosh	117
Noble Soul - S. Krishna Rao	115
Saint and Surgeon - Venkatesananda	112
Thou Triumphant Aspiration Personified	
- Chidananda	109

INFORMATORY

Ashram New and Notes 22, 46, 69, 93, 118,
 142, 166, 179, 191, 353, 383, 404

FOREIGN TRANSLATIONS

Message of Sivananda - Indonesian	352
Poems of Sivananda - German	349
Sayings of Sivananda - French	19
—of Sivananda - German	96
Sivananda's Upadeshamala - Danish	350, 403
Teachings of Sivananda - French	348
Voice of the Himalayas - Spanish	351

FACSIMILE

Letter-Blocks of Swami Sivananda appear
on the cover pages of all issues and on page 373

SIVANANDA : THE POET, PHILOSOPHER AND SAINT

Here is an interesting appraisal of the Master by a close disciple, Srimati Savitri Asopa, M.A., dealing on the life and the personality of the saint, the philosopher Sivananda and the philosophers of the West, and day-to-day anecdotes. The book also contains 'poetic homage' to the poet-sage and a collection of meditations. (Rs. 3)

Sivananda Publication League, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

One of the finest, most comprehensive and ideally synthetic commentaries available on this great scripture, here, within its nine hundred pages are found the portrayal of the intuitive Self-realization of a world-renowned saint, the practical analysis of the multiple problems of life, and the most salutary means to their solution.

The *Bhagavad Gita* presents to the reader the cream of India's glorious spiritual philosophy, reflecting the phase when it had reached its zenith of perfection, the pinnacle of idealism, and yet it is emphatic of the down-to-earth realism as to give the most complete scope of the fruition of

the highest ideal in everyone's practical life.

Such a work is focused through the prismatic mind of Maharshi Sivananda.

Containing the original text, alphabetical Sloka index, word-to-word meaning, and verse-by-verse translation, these voluminous commentaries on the Gita are printed in a single volume (for the fifth time). Copies can be had from the General Printing Works Private Ltd. 83, Old China Bazar Street, Calcutta-1, at Rs. 10/- per copy, exclusive of the postage.

CONSTRUCTION OF 'KUTIR' AT SIVANANDANAGAR

Away from the din of modern cities and yet not far removed from such amenities as are necessary for comfortable living, Sivanandanagar (near Rishikesh, U.P.), offers adequate facilities for rest-giving holidays. Here, in sylvan solitude, spiritually soothing atmosphere, on the bank of the holy

Ganga, many devotees spend their holidays in the saintly company of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. For this purpose they have constructed small residential quarters of their own. Anyone is welcome to do so. Construction charges for a single room is Rs. 2,500. For details please write to:

Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

TO THOSE WHO WISH TO VISIT SIVANANDANAGAR

We give below the "working hours" of the Divine Life Society, the Sivananda General Hospital, the Eye Hospital, and the hours during which visitors can have Darshan of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, so that those who are new to the Ashram might not be disappointed:

1. The D.L.S. Offices are open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a break for lunch; this applies to the Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmacy, too.

2. The Sivananda General Hospital is open from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., and from 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

3. The Sivananda Eye Hospital is open from 4 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

4. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj gives Darshan in the Diamond Jubilee Office Hall from 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m., and in the Satsang Bhavan from 8 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Visitors are requested

not to press for Darshan of Sri Swamiji Maharaj at any other time.

5. The Asana class is held from 6 a.m. to 7.30 a.m.

6. The Vedanta Class is held from 3.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

7. Night Satsanga is held from 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

N.B. The timings are for winter months. Visitors who wish to spend a few days at the Ashram are requested to obtain prior permission from the Secretary, Divine Life Society, through post. Those who regularly visit the Ashram from time to time may only intimate the Secretary of the date of arrival and the number of persons arriving.

There is an ENQUIRY OFFICE where any other information the visitor needs will be furnished.

Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

Subscribers to *The Divine Life* Society are requested to renew their subscription immediately, so as to ensure that they receive the January 1959 number to which they are entitled. Please quote your subscription reference number and address in block-letters. Payment may be sent by money order (an International Postal Order) or seven shillings, or one US dollar. International postal coupons are also accepted.

We request those members of the Divine Life Society who have not yet renewed their subscription for the next year, so as to enable us to send them the January 1959 number of *Wisdom-Light*, which is the members' magazine. Payment may be sent by seven shillings, or one US dollar, without delay.

Anyone devoted to non-violence and purity can join the Divine Life Society, which is a spiritual organization, embodying in its principles the highest ideals of the world, or of spiritual life. It accords equal place to all religious traditions, and its members recognize no distinction or disruptive sentiment on account of each others' traditional background or ancestral

Divine Life

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1958

or the philosophy of Sri Sivananda do not negate, 150 new members were admitted. Founding members, etc.

of the Divine Life Society, in connection with the Hindu Religious Council, the earliest of which is Rs. 12, or more. It meets the spiritual needs of the *Gazette*, e. about the activities of the various Centres, and particularly the Swami Sivanand Ashram. The Society is inclined individually to spread divine knowledge, purity and fellowship among people.

Subscribers to the other periodicals such as *Swami Weekly* (in English), *Health and Longevity* (in English), *Yog-Vedanta*—in English (Rs. 3.75), and *Yoga*—in Hindi (Rs. 3.75), to renew their subscription to the

Life (Rs. 3.75), and *Yog-Vedanta*—in Hindi (Rs. 3.75), to renew their subscription to the

for the next year, before the end of this month.

OUR THANKS : NEW YEAR GREETINGS

We offer our grateful thanks to the readers of *The Divine Life* and to all those whose contributions have appeared herein during this year. We thank them all for giving us the opportunity to disseminate the knowledge of divine life, and hope that they will all continue to be associated

with our spiritual mission in the coming year well.

We wish all our readers, in particular, a happy New Year, everybody, in general, a very happy new year, good health, successful enterprises, peace, prosperity and spiritual attainment. May God bless you all.

Secretary, Divine Life Society.

ANNOUNCEMENT

It has been brought to our notice that, in spite of our repeated announcements in these columns, some persons continue to go about collecting money from members of the Divine Life Society and disciples of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in the name of the Society and Sri Gurudeva.

We once again caution the public to beware of such persons. The Society does not have any such representatives. If at all someone is seen to be collecting money for collection of donations (which is generally not done), he will always have a letter of authorization signed by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Secretary, Divine Life Society.